10 Things Secretaries/Enrollment Personnel

Can Do for Students Experiencing Homelessness

**1. Learn to identify the following tell-tale signs of homelessness:**

**• Chronic hunger or tiredness**

**• Erratic attendance at schools**

**• Attendance at multiple schools**

**• Poor grooming or clothing that draws attention**

**• Lack of records, such as birth certificate, immunization record, pre-school physical, and school records, or incomplete records**

**• Parent who seems confused when asked about the last school attended**

**• Low-income motel address on enrollment form**

**• Statements from family when enrolling, such as:**

**“We’ve been having a hard time lately.” “It’s a new address. I can’t remember it.”**

**“We move a lot and are staying with friends until we find a place.”**

**2. Assure families that children can enroll if you think that they are experiencing homelessness. (This is mandated by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act, P.L. 107-110.)**

**• Enroll the child immediately (even without records). Ask for the name and city of the last school attended; then call that school and ask to have the records sent.**

**• Arrange for the child to take a placement test if records are not available.**

**3. Take the family to a private place to fill out enrollment forms.**

**4. Offer to assist with filling out the enrollment forms. Hesitation may indicate an inability to read.**

**5. Assist with filling out free and reduced-price meal program forms. Arrange for lunch that day.**

**6. Have copies of the school/class supply lists.**

**7. Provide a welcome pack with paper, pencil, pen, and crayons (younger grades).**

**8. Privately and confidentially alert the child’s teacher and guidance counselor of the student’s living situation.**

**9. Before a student leaves, prepare a parent pack, a 9” x 12” (laminated, if possible) mailing envelope with photocopies of the student’s records (scholastic, social security, immunization, etc.). Share a copy with the family, and be prepared to share records with the new school quickly to expedite appropriate placement.**

**10. Be sensitive, patient, calm, and reassuring. YOU can make a difference!**

*For more information, contact your school district’s homeless education liaison.*